

**REMARKS**

Claims 1, 3-9, 21, 22, 24-31 and 33-53 are rejected; claims 10-20 are withdrawn from consideration as being directed to a non-elected invention; and claims 2, 23 and 32 are objected to as being allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Preliminarily, Applicants affirm the election of Group I, claims 1-9 and 21-53 for prosecution, without traverse.

Claims 1, 4-9, 21-22, 25-31 and 34-53 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. 2006/0279908 to Omori et al (Omori '908).

Claims 1, 3-5, 6, 21-22, 24 and 29-31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 4,957,541 to Tripp et al.

Claims 1, 3-6, 8-9, 21-22, 24-26, 29-31, 33, 35-36 and 40-43 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. 2003/0110890 to He et al in view of Tripp et al.

Claims 44-53 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over He et al and Tripp et al as applied to claim 41, further in view of U.S. 2002/0064476 to Omori et al.

Claims 1, 3-9, 21-22, 24-31, 33, 37-38 and 40-53 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. 2003/0170169 to Omori et al in view of Tripp et al.

In response, claims 1, 22 and 31 have been amended to incorporate therein the recitation of claims 2, 23 and 32, respectively, to thereby obviate the foregoing rejections. Claims 2, 23 and 32 have been canceled.

Further, withdrawn intended method claim 10 has been amended to include all of the limitations of amended product claim 1. If claim 1 is found to be allowable, Applicants respectfully request rejoinder of withdrawn method claims 10-20 pursuant to MPEP § 821.04.

Applicants further comment as follows.

As claimed in claim 22, the mixed layer is present in the vicinity of the outer surface and the vicinity of the in-pore surface. The "outer surface" and "in-pore surface" indicate the surfaces of the granulated particles. The "outer surface" means the outer periphery of the particle of the granulated powder, whereas the "in-pore surface" means the surface which appears inside the pores of the granulated particle. See page 27, lines 10-15 and page 31, lines 11-14 of the specification.

Entry of the amendments, withdrawal of the foregoing rejections, rejoinder of withdrawn method claims 10-20 and allowance of claims 1, 3-22, 24-31 and 33-53 is earnestly solicited.

In the event that the Examiner believes that it may be helpful to advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the local Washington, D.C. telephone number indicated below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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